



**Supporting Success and Productivity:
Practical Tools for Making Your University
a Great Place to Work**

**ALIGNING FACULTY PERFORMANCE
EXPECTATIONS WITH INSTITUTIONAL
VISION**

Charles F. Harrington
University of North Carolina at Pembroke
United States

Billie Jo Hunt
University of North Carolina at Pembroke
United States

Historically, higher education has looked toward new faculty entering academe as a strategic lever to infuse and maintain academic vitality at an institution. Yet, they are also expected to embrace existing institutional values and contribute to the fulfillment of institutional vision.

National data indicate that this new pool of intellectual talent is becoming a smaller segment of the full-time instructional workforce (NCES, 2001). Additionally, increases in the diversity of new college faculty both in terms of academic disciplinary specialty and cultural identity as well as changes to the definition of an academic career challenge the deliberate formation of an intellectual community aligned by concrete institutional values and vision. If colleges and universities are to maintain institutional energy and vitality and sustain a community of scholars among the faculty, they must begin to place greater emphasis on the professional development, socialization needs of new faculty, and solidify their understanding of and commitment to existing institutional values. This paper provides suggestions for a new faculty development/orientation program that recognize the evolving academic career in the 21st Century and still communicates performance expectations and creates an intellectual community.

Overview

Shifting faculty demographics are beginning to exert profound impact upon institutions. The National Center for Education Statistics has indicated that more than one-third of the nation's full-time faculty corps are 55 years of age or older (NCES, 2001). This represents a dramatic increase over the previous decade, where only a quarter of faculty fell into this age range. Work by Bland and Berquist (1997) estimates that nearly 70 percent of faculty teaching today are within age for early or phased retirement. As a result, in the next 10 years, institutions will see an influx of new attitudes, skills, behaviors, and experiences brought by the "Millennial Faculty". These faculty, born in the 1980's and later will have a profound effect on the professoriate. Oftentimes, with the retirement of these senior faculty comes a diminished appreciation for and commitment to traditional institutional values, be they a commitment to a liberal arts education, regional engagement, a research and scholarship orientation, or some other institutional distinctive.

Historically, higher education has looked toward new faculty entering academe as a critical lever to infuse and maintain vitality at an institution. Frequently, these new faculty come to campus with a more current disciplinary knowledge base than many of their senior colleagues. However, these new faculty members are under increasingly greater pressure to demonstrate excellence in classroom teaching, scholarship, and internal and external service.

On top of these enormous pressures, new faculty face a constant and rapidly changing academic environment. The expectation of integrating technology into the delivery of the curriculum, utilizing web-based course management tools, developing service learning components in courses, the scholarship of teaching and learning, managing engagement with institutional stakeholders, creating and maintaining electronic professional development portfolios, and developing competency at student learning outcomes assessment, are but a few of the many expectations held for faculty of all ranks. Institutional faculty development programs must serve both the existing and future needs of the faculty. Faculty development programming must be looking ahead to complement the skill sets new faculty already have and those skill sets needed.

This paper abridges some of the current literature and institutional practices concerning faculty development. Particular attention is given to methods by which institutions can leverage their new faculty orientation programs to communicate performance expectations and help faculty respond proactively to the changing nature of academic work. Consideration of how current economic conditions affect faculty development initiatives is also discussed, as are of many of the current and future issues underlying the need for meaningful faculty development opportunities.

The objectives of this invited paper session are to (1) discuss the various changes that are facing new faculty as they enter academic careers in the 21st Century, (2) what these changes mean to an institutional vision and

value system, (3) briefly review the purpose of new faculty orientation programs, (4) provide an overview of how universities can shape their new faculty orientation programming to address the changing academic environment and create an intellectual and scholarly community on campus, and (5) discuss implications for academic leadership.

Issues Facing New Faculty in the 21st Century

In 1994, Mary Deane Sorcinelli provided an extensive summary of the factors contributing to both the stress and satisfaction levels of faculty new to the professorate (Sorcinelli, 1994). Even a cursory review of this list suggests that little has changed in the past decade to substantially alter the overall composition of these factors.

Sorcinelli (1994) notes several sources of workplace stress for new faculty members: time constraints, both in their professional and personal lives; inadequate feedback and recognition; insufficient resources; and, a lack of collegiality were commonly cited. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many departments have experienced little if any resource gains over the past decade thus contributing negatively to the overall stress level of the professoriate. In addition, Rice, Sorcinelli, and Austin (2000) note that new faculty members feel significant stress emanating from conflicting professional responsibilities and the balance between personal and professional lives. These stresses will be exacerbated with the influx of the “millennial faculty” who demand work/life balance and flexibility. These faculty are entering academe with the expectation of a highly connected, robust information rich setting where teaching and learning take place in ways and settings different from the traditional environment.

The main source of workplace satisfaction for many new faculty members is the intrinsic rewards of a career in academe (e.g., the nature of academic work and the relative autonomy of carrying out that work). Sorcinelli (1994) also points out that work environment, quality of colleagues and overall collegiality are very important as are more measurable items such as funding opportunities, library resources, and opportunities to work with students. Additionally, more and more faculty are desiring an interdisciplinary and entrepreneurial climate where they can collaborate to develop new ideas, products, and/or services. With minor exceptions, there is little available evidence to suggest that the overall nature of academic work has changed over the past decade.

However, recent intrusions into faculty autonomy by outside entities seeking to require faculty to justify and document all aspects faculty work may be perceived as a serious threat to faculty autonomy that might lead to lower satisfaction levels for all faculty (i.e., the threat of strong federal government oversight and accountability mechanisms suggested by the Spelling Commission, U.S. Department of Education (2006)). Regardless of the implications of the Commission’s recommendations for faculty autonomy, one can be quite sure that faculty entering into the professorate early in the 21st Century will face accountability issues exceeding those of their predecessors. In addition to these changing societal pressures and expectations, faculty also face increasing student diversity, the application of new technologies, and an evolving academic job market (Austin, 2002).

Student diversity bears special mention since of all the potential changes facing new faculty it represents the most dynamic. All expectations point to ever increasing levels of student diversity as the 21st Century progresses. With increasing student diversity comes complicated student motivations, needs, expectations, and backgrounds (Keller, 2001). New faculty must have a greater appreciation for working with diverse student populations than did their counterparts in previous faculty generations. However, recent evidence indicates that the new influx of faculty are themselves more diverse and have throughout their own education been exposed to increasing diversity not seen by previous generations of faculty (Howe and Strauss, 2000).

These potential pressures highlight the need for dialog between administration, senior faculty, and new faculty concerning issues both on and off campus. Sorcinelli (1994) notes that new faculty endorse programs that seek to introduce them to campus (e.g., new faculty orientation programs). It should be clear that any such program must also include discussions concerning higher education in general as well as the current institutional climate, including discussion of institutional history, mission, and strategic vision.

Perhaps one of the most important aspects underpinning an academic search is the issue of “fit”. Faculty want to be certain that new members to the academic department or school compliment the existing cadre and possess the intellectual and character traits that will strengthen the department or unit. From an employment search perspective, faculty seek colleagues of “like mind”. Of increasing concern is the matter of institutional fit. The likelihood of incongruence between the expectations and experiences of new faculty as they acclimate to their new academic homes is of significant concern to many institutions. When there is a clear mismatch between a new faculty member and their institution, much is lost. These new faculty can become disenfranchised, non productive, disgruntled, and oftentimes leave prematurely. Given the cost of academic searches, in terms of time, effort, and expense, assuring the proper “fit” with the institution is of vital importance.

New Faculty Orientation Programs

New faculty need and desire information about their new surroundings, including the values embraced by the institution and the individual academic department. Ideally, the orientation process should begin before hiring. Department Chairs, Deans, Provosts, and others need to discuss the campus environment, support mechanisms, and expectations before a commitment is made to hire an individual. This process needs to continue after hiring and before the new faculty member arrives onto campus. Information conveyed through two-way communication channels can help prepare the new faculty, Chair, and department for arrival of new faculty.

New faculty orientation programs typically provide institutions with a means to convey information about the institution in a timely and efficient manner. Although orientation programs for new faculty are likely as diverse as programs for new students, certain content should be considered standard. The program should afford new faculty the opportunity to develop relationships with their new departmental and university colleagues, both with other new faculty and with senior faculty; the opportunity to learn about performance expectations for teaching, scholarship, and service (particularly those espoused in the institution’s standards and criteria for promotion and tenure; and, an exposure to an institution’s intellectual community. Fink (1992) offers an expanded content list that includes suggestions for active learning sessions on teaching and scholarship that stress audience interaction so as to foster and sustain cohort development and cohesion.

Orientation programs have traditionally been used to convey information regarding how the institution “works” and the generic type of “who’s who and what’s what” on the campus. New faculty orientation programs tend to have rather consistent goals that typically involve: exposing the new faculty to the culture of the institution; providing information concerning the institution, its faculty, programs and available services; connecting the new faculty to other colleagues; and, establishing expectations for new faculty concerning scholarship, teaching, and service. Information is normally conveyed in a workshop/lecture format with campus representatives talking to new faculty members over a period of hours or even days in some cases.

Another source of variability in orientation programming is the locus of control and responsibility for the orientation programming. Although institutions may have a global orientation for new faculty some institutions have chosen to conduct department-level orientation. The rationale being that the department is the typical place wherein new faculty are introduced to the expectations for scholarship, teaching and service. Basically, those conducting departmental orientations believe the role of a new faculty member is to be defined by and within the department and not by either the college or the institution. The goals of these programs are to have new faculty adopt the philosophy and habits of their departmental colleagues. Still others would hold that this departmental view is too myopic and can lead to the adoption of certain professional behaviors that are not sufficiently broad enough to effectively serve the institution or college’s goals (Welch, 2002).

Regardless of where orientation takes place, the overwhelming importance of the department chairperson should be stressed. The department chairperson is the primary source of information and direction for new faculty member’s successful acclimation to the institution (Sorcinelli, 1994). Also, it must be stressed that

an academic community has two distinct groups of necessary participants: the faculty, both new and established, who create and sustain the culture of the institution; and the administration that both participate in the culture and use the culture to improve the organization (Frost and Jean, 2000).

Becher (1994) presents a strong case for the need for a culturally binding sense of community in higher education due to concerns about recent strengthening of discipline-based academic subcultures. The need to create opportunities for cross-discipline programming and research relationships is vital and necessary. Orientation programs provide institutions with the opportunity to create this deliberate and purposeful interaction, assist in developing new campus cultures, and work to provide a sense of community.

Orientation programming provides a very good opportunity to align faculty expectations with institutional values and vision. Academic administrators and faculty development professionals can provide elucidation with regards to these matters. It is important that the messages conveyed in this regard are complimentary. Of particular importance is the role that the department chairperson and academic dean play in articulating and defending the importance and centrality of value and vision.

So, how can a new faculty orientation program be used to form an intellectual community of scholars? Bringing cross-disciplinary groups of faculty together to engage in academic discussions of any form will establish the foundation of an intellectual community. Orientation programs afford the institution to begin this building process within the first few weeks of a new faculty member's time on campus. The lessons learned early can be expected to have a lasting impression.

Mentoring – A Critical Component of New Faculty Orientation

Mentoring programs have become a critical component to new faculty orientation processes on university campuses. New faculty are besieged with the role of balancing the duties of teaching, scholarship and collegial responsibilities while interpreting the organizational culture of their new campus setting. Mentoring will service new faculty in their acclimatization to the university culture while offering strategies to enhancement in the areas of teaching and scholarship. In most instances, the mentoring process functions as a three-party relationship when the responsibilities of the department chair are factored into the mentoring equation.

New faculty mentors are traditionally senior faculty members with an exceptional reputation in teaching and scholarship. Another distinct characteristic of a good faculty mentor is their recollection of the stresses and obstacles of balancing the various roles of a new or junior faculty position. Sorcinelli (1995) suggest this one-on-one relationship between the mentor and their protégé need not be a “perfectly” ‘matched set.’ In fact, heterogeneous interdisciplinary pairs may produce a complimentary relationship that will promote valuable intellectual exchange.

Senior faculty are knowledgeable of the importance and oftentimes the origins of institutional values and vision and are able to communicate these important institutional characteristics to new faculty. However, unlike a number of other salient issues covered in traditional new faculty mentoring, conveying the importance of institutional values oftentimes takes time and patience.

The overall value of mentoring programs certainly outweighs the minimal costs to the operation of the process. Traditionally, the funding necessary to operate a successful mentoring program may be limited to the occasional mentor and mentee social gathering. Some campuses may elect to offer their mentors a nominal stipend, funds for instructional resources or even a course release in exchange for their invaluable service to the efforts to retaining new and junior faculty members.

Starting Point for Creating a Successful Orientation Program

New faculty orientation must begin even before the new faculty member arrives on campus and should continue well beyond their first few weeks on campus. The first step in the process of creating an intellectual community within any institution is the hiring process. The search for new faculty begins with



departmental discussions concerning needs and ends with the hiring of a new faculty member. The hiring process affords both the department and the institution numerous opportunities to convey expectations to potential hires and to enhance the existing intellectual community.

Beginning with the crafting of the job advertisement, the department should communicate broad performance expectations (e.g., teaching loads, service focus, and scholarship emphasis). The actual interview process can afford the existing faculty explicit opportunity for communicating expectations and for the personal bonding necessary in building community. Anecdotal evidence suggests that most interviews stress the communications of expectations but do not focus on the building of community, intellectual or otherwise. If this is the case, an important opportunity is lost. To begin building a sense of community, the department must discuss more than classroom responsibilities and quantitative publication requirements prior to conducting candidate interviews. What personal and professional attributes does the department value in a colleague? How do the department viewpoints fit into the broader college and university vision? How do departmental orientation programs fit within college or institutional-wide orientation programs? Are there any differential or mixed messages being communicated to the new faculty? These questions must be broadly discussed by each party involved in some part of new faculty orientation planning.

Case Study

Institutional Context

The University of North Carolina at Pembroke is a public, four-year master's degree-granting university, founded in 1887 as the first public teacher training program for American Indians in the United States. Part of the University of North Carolina system, the institution has an historic commitment to access and opportunity, serving a large number of first-generation college students. The University has been acknowledged by U.S. News and World Report and The Princeton Review for its commitment to diversity. Currently, total minority student enrollment accounts for 49 percent of student headcount. Although still primarily a commuter institution, UNC Pembroke is becoming increasingly residential with more than 30% of the undergraduate student body currently residing on campus, and another 15% living within a 15 minute walk. The University offers a complete compliment of extra and co-curricular activities for students, designed specifically to promote the academic, social, and civic development of the UNC Pembroke student.

The University is located in Robeson County, which was recently identified by the U.S. Census Bureau as the third poorest county of its size in the United States. The county has an estimated poverty rate of 32.9%. Outreach is an important part of the University of North Carolina at Pembroke's mission in Southeast North Carolina. The University is committed to its constituents and stakeholders not only as an educational resource, but also as a partner in workforce and economic development.

A Context for Change

Beginning with the 2005-06 academic year the University was experiencing significant change in executive academic leadership with the addition of a new Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs, dean of the School of Education, and dean of the University Honors College. Concurrent with this leadership change was a rapid transformation in the demographic characteristics of the University faculty. The faculty was growing increasingly more cosmopolitan, as the majority of faculty were serving the institution for fewer than five years and were coming to the campus from areas outside the University's traditional three state faculty recruitment area. Interestingly, the growth of new tenure eligible faculty occurred during a time of increased competition in the academic marketplace for doctorally-qualified faculty. This period also witnessed increasing institutional reliance on part-time and adjunct faculty, in essence creating a two class academic community.

With this influx of new faculty, came new expectations for faculty performance, vis-à-vis promotion and tenure, the depth and breadth of professional development opportunities, and a growing divergence of opinion as to what core academic and institutional values should be held by the faculty. With increasing

frequency, newly hired faculty (within 3-5 years of initial hire) were leaving the institution before promotion and tenure decisions due to institutional “fit” issues, such as the very heavy emphasis on teaching, expectations for student engagement outside of the classroom, the historic mission of the institution (Native American serving), and the economic and social shortcomings of the University’s immediate service area.

There was a clear need to reconsider and communicate performance expectations of faculty. These faculty expectations needed to be articulated in ways that assured that they were aligned with institutional mission and vision.

During the 2006-07 academic year, the institution embarked on its first organized attempt at institutional strategic planning. Among the various planning activities undertaken was the development of an institutional values statement, a statement of institutional distinctiveness, and an array of strategic priorities. Of immediate concern was the matter of inculcating new and junior faculty to these values and distinctiveness statements. The University also desired to develop a strategy by which these issues were communicated throughout the academic search process.

A Program for Change

In an attempt to more fully understand and appreciate the complexity of these challenges, the Office of the Provost administered the Harvard COACHE survey to all full-time, tenure eligible faculty. The survey permits faculty to assess their experiences regarding promotion and tenure, the nature of their work, policies and practices, and the general climate, culture and level of collegiality on their campuses. The results of this survey administration revealed significant challenges requiring institutional attention.

Concerns with these pressing issues were presented to the Executive Committee of the University’s faculty governance body. By engaging the University faculty in discussion regarding faculty expectations, it became clear that faculty leadership expected programmatic and policy development initiatives to more effectively align faculty performance expectations with institutional vision. To this end, considerable attention was given to the recruitment and retention of faculty, including the content and organization of faculty development programming.

The Faculty Welfare subcommittee of the University’s Faculty Senate recommended a series of programmatic changes to help promote this institutional expectation realignment included:

- Faculty recruitment practices (academic couples, faculty of color, international faculty), with particular emphasis on using faculty recruitment in setting the tone for institutional expectations relative to institutional value, culture, climate, and collegiality,
- Revised faculty orientation processes implementing a mentoring component, with particular emphasis on using new faculty orientation to set the tone for performance expectations,
- Empower faculty as agents and drivers of these changes,
- Broaden the definition of scholarship to accommodate the four domains of scholarship espoused by the late Ernest Boyer, and recognize and reward faculty work in engagement, and
- Identify the various ways in which faculty work is recognized and rewarded

This particular approach was chosen in order to focus principle attention on junior tenure-eligible faculty, particularly those within the first three years of service to the University. The programs primary intended outcomes were to establish a plan by which faculty expectations could be integrated into new faculty orientation, the University’s promotion and tenure criteria, and the faculty recognition and rewards structure. An additional important outcome was to increase faculty satisfaction with the teaching climate and culture of the institution, and to provide opportunities for faculty to participate in campus wide discussion regarding faculty life, including defining scholarship and faculty work.

A number of changes have been made as a result of the recommendations of the faculty governance body. A faculty recruitment and selection manual was developed that provides guidance to faculty search committees on methods to articulate, stress, and demonstrate the centrality of institutional vision and performance expectation during the search process. Concomitant with the development of the manual was the creation of an online professional development program that provided training for all search committee representatives, including the chairperson.

One particularly important change is the articulation of expectations in the early stages of the search (beginning with the letter recognizing the candidate's c.v. and application materials). A faculty subcommittee comprised of new, mid-career, and senior faculty has been working with the University's Teaching and Learning Center to make substantive changes to the University's new faculty orientation programming in order to give increased attention to faculty performance expectations and institutional vision and culture. This new programming includes a faculty mentoring component that matches incoming faculty with mid-career and senior faculty. Mentoring assignments are done randomly to encourage a diverse array of mentor-mentee relationships. An additional component of the new faculty orientation programming is a series of workshops given by senior faculty which provide opportunity for input on faculty life issues.

Secondary program outcomes included increasing the number of tenure eligible faculty positions, increasing the number of academic career couples, and increasing the institution's ability to successfully hire first and second choice faculty candidates. Given the notion that a new faculty hire represents at least a million-dollar investment to the university, the recruitment and retention of the highest caliber faculty may be labeled as one of the most important missions of the institution. There is a growing frequency of top candidates in a faculty search coming to the negotiation table with spousal employment needs. Often the availability of employment for the spouse represents the strongest consideration in the candidate's decision to accept the position. With that consideration, there has been a shift from anti-nepotism policies to a trend in providing accommodations for academic couples in the hiring negotiations. Despite the challenges of hiring academic career couples, the recruitment and development of highly qualified faculty depends in part on the institution's willingness to foster the professional objectives of these dual-career couples.

At the University of North Carolina at Pembroke, significant attention has been given to the desire to attract and retain dual career couples. Position advertisements include narrative on dual career employment, academic personnel involved in faculty searches have been advised to provide information to prospective candidates regarding the University's interests, and academic departments and schools are provided with incentives to increase the number of dual career hires.

The institution is currently considering approaches to evaluate the effectiveness of these new faculty development and faculty expectation programs. Evaluative criteria are being developed with the input from the University's faculty governance structure, senior academic leadership, and faculty focus groups. Clearly, central to this issue of effectiveness will be the expectation for an increase in satisfaction with institutional climate. When there is congruence between faculty expectation and performance, moderate to high levels of faculty satisfaction with institutional climate, support, and direction, we would hopefully see a better faculty-institutional "fit" and increased faculty retention. Our principle objective is to create an environment conducive to high faculty productivity and increased/enhanced student learning.

Anecdotal evidence would suggest that these programs are providing to be very successful. Initial progress has included the reorganization and modification of new faculty orientation programming, revision of faculty performance expectations for promotion and tenure as stated in the University's Faculty Handbook, increased attention to the role of faculty as change agents, and considerable discussion with regard to the recognition and reward of faculty work.

Conclusions and Implications

The alignment of faculty performance expectations with institutional vision is vital to faculty satisfaction, success, and welfare. Institutions, and in particular, academic deans and department chairpersons cannot blindly assume that new faculty will be inculcated to the vision and ethos of a campus by osmosis. Colleges and universities must develop and implement faculty orientation and professional development programs that specifically aid new faculty adjustment into the social, political, and historic fabric of the institution.

Academic administration, particularly the department chairperson and chairs of academic search committees, coupled with the responsibility of the new faculty mentor, play the most important roles in articulating and aligning institutional values and vision as a function of new faculty orientation programming. The search committee chairperson is the primary source of information from the time the faculty member interviews with the institution until tenure. As noted in the literature, once the new faculty members is hired, the department chairperson is their first and most important mentor. (Brent and Felder, 2000). As the old saying goes “you only get one chance to make a first impression.” This especially holds true for a new faculty orientation program.

New faculty orientation should not be viewed as a one-time, episodic, or several day event. A new faculty member’s orientation to the institution and its basic tenets should begin during the hiring process and continue throughout their early career. The department and search committees chairpersons should review the planning process for a faculty search as the planning process for the orientation of a new faculty member.

The messages communicated to the new faculty must be clear and the delivery should be made by a carefully chosen group. If a new faculty member is to be oriented into an institution’s intellectual community that institution must first have a clear picture of what its intellectual community looks like. Without that picture, the first impression will both be poor and not well received. The department should receive consistent and clear guidance from all levels within the institution concerning what expectations are to be communicated

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